



September 23, 2021

Chair Phoebe Suina and
New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board Members
% Pamela Jones, Hearing Administrator
1190 Saint Francis Drive, Suite S2102
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
pamela.jones@state.nm.us

Dear Chair Suina and New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board Members,

As the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board prepares to finalize regulations this month to reduce emissions from oil and gas operations, we urge the board to ensure these rules are the strongest and most effective they can be to protect our climate and the health of all New Mexicans. As local and tribal elected officials throughout New Mexico, it is our responsibility to help make our communities as safe as possible for our constituents. That includes advocating for a healthy airshed.

Oil and gas emissions pose health risks to children, the elderly and frontline communities in close proximity to oil and gas activity, which are often rural and tribal communities. Volatile organic compounds released through industry operations are one of the primary components of ozone pollution, which can cause and worsen respiratory problems, and is responsible for the poor grades New Mexico counties routinely receive for air pollution in the American Lung Association's annual State of the Air Report.

Unchecked emissions carry major economic implications for New Mexico as well, which depends on oil and gas royalties to fund schools, infrastructure, public health and safety and other services. Leaking, venting and flaring methane equates to \$43 million in tax and royalty revenue the state misses out on each year. Capturing this needless waste is money that comes back to our communities.

Methane is also a powerful greenhouse gas that has more than 80 times the warming potency of carbon dioxide over the first 20 years after it reaches the atmosphere, and is responsible for about 25% of the climate change impacts we're experiencing today. New Mexico is home to some of the worst methane pollution in the nation. Reducing these emissions, therefore, is absolutely

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essential to addressing the climate crisis, and that requires stringent regulations that target methane and other pollutants that create ozone.

We are appreciative of the strong draft proposal that the New Mexico Environment Department released this spring, but urge the EIB to support rules with three key improvements: require more frequent inspections to find and fix leaks at well sites close to schools and residences; require companies to control pollution during well completions; and strengthen requirements to reduce pollution from pneumatic controllers, which are the second-largest source of methane emissions in New Mexico.

All of these improvements are necessary to meet Governor Lujan Grisham's state climate objectives and her commitment to implementing nation-leading methane and air pollution rules. They are necessary to protecting our most vulnerable communities and ensuring all New Mexicans can breathe clean air, preventing the needless waste of taxpayer-owned resources, and ensuring our state is healthy and thriving for generations to come.

We urge you to put New Mexico first and support these improvements.

Sincerely,

Carrie Hamblen
State Senator, District 38

Brenda McKenna
State Senator, District 9

Bill O'Neill
State Senator, District 13

Gerald Ortiz y Pino
State Senator, District 12

Mimi Stewart
State Senate President Pro Tem, District 17

Tara Lujan
State House Representative, District 48

Matthew McQueen
State House Representative, District 50

Kristina Ortiz
State House Representative, District 42

Andrea Romero
State House Representative, District 46

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Pat Davis
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Bernalillo County Commissioner

Anna Hansen
Santa Fe County Commissioner

Alicia Edwards
Grant County Commissioner

Hank Hughes
Santa Fe County Commissioner

Ken Miyagishima
Mayor, City of Las Cruces

Carol Romero-Wirth
Santa Fe City Councilor

Gabe Vasquez
Las Cruces City Councilor

Alan Webber
Mayor, City of Santa Fe

Daniel Tso
Navajo National Council Delegate

AnJanette Brush
Taos County Commissioner

Nathaniel Evans
Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Taos